COOLBAUGH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Work Session Minutes
July 7, 2026, 6:00pm

Board Members present:
William Weimer , Alma I. Ruiz-Smith, Clare Colgan, Lynn Kelly and Cara Rogan (via phone)
Board Members absent:
None
Staff present:
Patrick Armstrong, Solicitor, Erin Masker, Township Secretary, Meredith Eilber, Business Manager, and Lourdes Aponte, Zoning Officer
Staff absent:
None

Discussion on Appraisal Report for 489 Route 196 (Latzanich Property)

The Board reviewed the Route 196 parcel that had been appraised to evaluate possible township acquisition as open space. The Township appraisal came in at $260,000, while the property owner's appraisal was $330,000.

Solicitor Armstrong explained that under applicable statutes, the Township may not offer more than the average of the two appraisals, may offer less than the Township's appraisal, and may not exceed that averaged value for a purchase price.

Mr. Weimer stated that the real estate market has significantly increased in value compared to twenty years ago, but discussed the wetlands that are believed to be on the property which would decrease the amount of developable land although the appraisal showed no explicit wetlands call-out, despite prior requests, and members queried whether a formal wetlands or environmental study would be required beyond the appraisal. Other mapping previously reviewed suggested that roughly half the rear of the property could be wetlands and that much of the area lies under or near power lines and downhill from Pocono Farms, raising questions about drainage and environmental conditions.

During discussion, Ms. Ruiz-Smith suggested "ballpark" price of $100,000 as a possible starting point, with acknowledgement that such an offer might be viewed as low by the owner but that any developer would likely negotiate pricing downward based on development constraints.

Ms. Rogan stated that there is a visible motorized-vehicle path from a neighboring property across the site, suggesting regular traffic at some point and prompting questions about any impact on soil or subsurface conditions. Aerial images showing loops and tracks beneath the power lines and an apparent swampy area or pond with a stream passing through, reinforcing the perception of wet conditions and possible environmental constraints.

Solicitor Armstrong stated that before any agreement of sale is finalized, the Township could condition closing on Phase I environmental review (document-based) and, if indicated, Phase II testing to address soil and contamination concerns, including motorized vehicle activity observed on aerial imagery.

He suggested that the Board could first communicate its concerns about valuation and development limits to the property owner without making a formal offer. If the owner is interested, the Township could explore a tentative ballpark value and consider entering into an agreement of sale conditioned on satisfactory environmental review, with any detailed negotiation and environmental due diligence handled in executive session and then brought back to the Board for further action as needed. Ms. Eilber will reach out to the property owner, keeping the Board in the loop.

Public Comment

- No public comment was heard.

Work Session ended at 6:12pm.